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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In German (1GN0) Paper 1F
Listening & Understanding in German

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Paper 1F – Listening and Responding

The new specification introduced a significant number of changes. New question types were introduced and there were minor changes even to those that at first sight look familiar. Open-ended English questions have always discriminated well at Foundation level. The new examination features four questions in this format, rather than the one previously found on the legacy specification. Most of the Grade 4 and Grade 5 questions remain common to both Foundation and Higher tiers, although two of these are now set in the target language and feature new test types.

The new specification features some topics e.g. the environment which are new to GCSE listening. It was encouraging to see that for the most part students coped well with these. Centres are reminded that the targeted vocabulary on the Foundation paper is drawn from the minimum core vocabulary list, which is now more extensive than it was on the legacy specification, and also that the vast majority of words on it will feature in examinations over a period of time.

Centres entered their students appropriately at Foundation level for the most part. This year continued the trend noted for the last few years of a greater proportion of students being entered at Foundation Level. The Foundation paper differentiated well between students of varying abilities. Weaker students were able to identify key words and messages from topics with which they were familiar. Most questions which require the recognition of single lexical items or short phrases were well done, although some individual items of vocabulary caused problems. Stronger performances showed the ability to make simple conclusions and differentiate between different time frames.

Question 1 (Holidays)

This common topic proved to be a gentle introduction to the paper for most students. Where there was an error it was usually where students did not recognise that *Berge* means mountains.

Question 2 (Work)

This question featured a familiar test type. However, students were asked to select the correct answer from four possible ones whereas in the past it was one from three. This did not affect performance on this question which was done well by almost all students. Q2(i) and Q2(ii) were almost universally correct as they merely required recognition of two common vocabulary items (*Koch* and *Krankenhaus*). Q2(iii) proved slightly more difficult as it involved making a link to be made between *verdienen* and pay.

Question 3 (Socialising with friends)

Although not a completely new test type, students had to choose from a greater number of possible answers. As a result only a small minority of students were able to score full marks. Students should be aware that this type of basic inference question involves rather more than listening for the German translations of the words on the question paper. It is important to listen carefully to the passage as a whole before deciding on the most appropriate answer. Silke's answer was the least accessible. Students needed to appreciate that the verb *chatten* is only used about online communication and that *über die Schule* means about school. "I only see my friends at school" was a frequent incorrect answer. Many more students realised that *am Marktplatz* must imply in town. An extra clue was that the verb *treffen* appeared in the dialogue and its direct English equivalent in the correct answer. The verb *wandern* in Steffi's answer was understood by the majority of students.

Question 4 (Eating out)

This question featured an identical test type to Q3 and therefore many of the comments given above also apply. The main difference was that this question featured one speaker, a mother talking about her family, rather than three different ones. Students not only had to identify correct answers but also which member of the family was being referred to. This proved taxing for many. Most students realised that *er hat keine Vorspeise gegessen* meant that Fabian did not eat a starter. The link between *lecker* and Laura's enjoyment of her meal proved accessible to many students. The key phrase relating to Julian ie *zum ersten Mal* was missed by many. The most frequent incorrect answer was "had a dessert with cream", given by students who did not appreciate the significance of *ohne* in the phrase *Obsttorte ohne Sahne bestellt*.

Question 5 (Weather)

This question was a good discriminator with only a small amount of students able to score more than 1 mark. Open-ended questions requiring students to answer in English continue to be challenging for weaker students. Students are advised to read the questions carefully, focusing in particular on the question words used. One word from the German passage was sufficient to answer each question. The most frequently correct answer was Q5(b), requiring the recognition of *Nachmittag*. In Q5(c) many students misread the question, giving the temperature itself rather than where that would be, ie *im Osten*. In Q5(d) many students gave the answer "snow" failing to spot that the phrase *nächste Woche* made this irrelevant to the question asked.

Question 6 (Pressures at school)

This is a new test type and featured quite complex subject matter for Foundation tier, although everything was in the minimum core vocabulary. Students were

required to make simple deductions based on the limited information given. The link between *vielleicht bekomme ich keine gute Stelle* and unemployment proved to be particularly demanding at this level. More students understood *wiederholen* and were not put off by the unusual suggestion that someone should actually enjoy revision. Most impressive was the number of students who appreciated the meaning of *Ich hoffe, ich falle ...nicht durch* despite the verb appearing in separated form.

Question 7 (Environmental issues)

Performance on this question, which featured one of the new topic areas, was impressive. Most students were able to score the majority of the three marks available.

Question 8 (Living and working abroad)

Open-ended questions requiring students to answer in English continue to be challenging for some. Imprecise and ambiguous use of English played a significant role in this question, leading many students to drop marks unnecessarily. Q8a proved the most accessible part, requiring students to understand the verb *studiert*. In Q(b) students had to infer that Ulrike is a tour guide because she takes groups around the cathedral. The answer "cathedral" could not be credited, being a place rather than a job. Other students heard the noun *Trinkgeld* in *Viele Touristen geben ihr ein Trinkgeld* and inferred wrongly that she must be a waitress. In Q8(c) some students assumed that Ulrike could not hear well rather than that the students did not listen. The difference between *sie* (she) and *sie* (they) is often crucial in answering questions accurately.

Question 9 (At the travel agent)

This crossover question proved an effective discriminator at Foundation level. Q9(ii) was for the most part answered correctly. Students should note that information relevant to a particular answer is often clearly signposted. In Q9(i) *das ist für uns am wichtigsten* clearly points to food (in this case *vegetarische Spezialitäten*) as the answer. Negatives such as *nicht* or *kein* are often crucial in determining the correct answer. Q9(iv) was a good example of this. Many students heard the noun *Auto* and therefore assumed that car hire must be the right answer, failing to notice the inclusion of *kein*. The phrasing of the question (She enquires about..) suggests that the answer may come in the form of a question (*Können Sie uns über Ausflüge mit dem Bus informieren?*).

Question 10 (Village festival)

The need for precision when answering open response questions was very clear here, particularly in Q10(b) and Q10(c). Some answers were too vague to gain credit eg Q10(b) it was entertaining. Others included important elements but negated these by including extra incorrect information eg Q10(c) they organise a

winter festival. In Q10(a) students needed to identify the region as the sunniest in Germany. There was frequent mention here of the hotels, which are a consequence of the region's fame rather than its cause.

Question 11 (School trip to Poland)

This crossover question featuring a familiar test type proved accessible to most students. The question required students not only to understand the gist of the passage but also to deduce the positive elements of the trip signposted in many different ways eg ...*war ausgezeichnet*.

Question 12 (Music festival in Switzerland)

Many of the comments on Q10 apply equally to Q12. The importance of listening carefully for detail cannot be overestimated. In Q12(a) many students did not appreciate the significance of *der Kartenverkauf* and assumed that the festival itself begins on 12th September. Many different answers were credited in Q12(c) but unfortunately not those which suggested that DJ Ötzi is number one in the charts now or that he has had 2000 number one singles!

Question 13 (Freiwillige Arbeit)

This new style of target language question poses significant challenges to students at Foundation Level. The first of these is to understand the possible answers in the box and the language in the questions. The listening passage often contains synonyms of the possible answers. For Q13(a) the answer (*im Freien*) equates to *draußen* in the listening extract. The answer *schmutzig* for Q13(e) is mirrored by *dreckig* in the listening passage. Other questions require simple deductions eg in Q13(b) *wir konnten an der Haltestelle ... aussteigen* suggests that they travelled by bus. In Q13(d) the fact that *unsere Chefin arbeitete zwölf Stunden täglich* suggests that she is fleißig.

Question 14 (Schultag)

This question requires students to choose the correct answer from a list of four possibilities. One of the four possible answers has to be used twice. Students do not have to supply their own words to complete the sentences but may only use one of the four words provided. This question involved drawing simple conclusions in order to choose the most suitable adjective eg in Q14(a) *Die Schüler haben mich sofort angenommen und mir alles Wichtige erzählt* implies that they were friendly. In Q14(e) if Claudia fell asleep in front of the TV when she got home it suggests that she was tired. It is worth pointing out that although all examples of this question type hitherto have featured adjectives this need not necessarily be so in future.

Advice for future performance

- Students should read all questions carefully, paying particular attention to question words.
- Students should ensure that they are familiar with the full range of vocabulary on the minimum core vocabulary.
- Students are advised to practise listening for gist and to understand simple sentence structures.
- Students are advised to listen carefully for qualifying adjectives and adverbs, in particular for negatives *nicht* and *kein*, to help them in particular to eliminate distractors when answering multiple-choice questions.
- Simple synonyms are often the key to success in the target language questions.

